

The Site Development Plan Process

WHAT IS A SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

A site development plan (SDP) is a detailed engineered drawing of a commercial, industrial, institutional or residential development project, showing existing site conditions and proposed improvements with sufficient detail for agency review, approval, and subsequent construction.

Some of the information included on a SDP are:

- Existing and proposed buildings and structures
- Driveways, sidewalks and paved parking areas
- Existing topography and proposed grades
- Drainage and stormwater management
- Sediment and erosion control
- Utilities and easements
- 100 year floodplain and non-tidal wetlands
- Forest stand delineation and forest conservation areas
- Landscaping
- Site conditions on adjacent properties

WHEN IS SDP APPROVAL REQUIRED?

A site development plan approved by the Department of Planning and Zoning is required prior to issuance of grading permits or building permits for the following development projects:

1. Nonresidential Development

- Includes new or expanded commercial, industrial, institutional and utility development, plus public buildings, schools and other public facilities.
- A change in use or expansion of a use may require a site development plan.

2. Residential Development

- Single-family attached, apartment and mobile home residential development.
- Development of single-family detached residential lots within the Planned Service Area for both public water and sewer, recorded on or after February 7, 1976. Singe-family detached lots recorded on a plat prior to February 7, 1976 are exempt from this

requirement unless more than 5,000 square feet of disturbance is proposed and the lots have not been reconfigured or merged through the recordation of plat after February 7, 1976

 Residential lots with New Town zoning, not meeting the residential requirements above, where the final development plan criteria requires submission of a site development plan.

3. Conditional Use Development

- All conditional uses in commercial or industrial districts.
- In other districts, the Department of Planning and Zoning may require a site development plan for conditional uses which require exterior site improvements.

HOW DO I APPLY?

The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) has an SDP application and checklist available at the Public Service Desk to assist applicants with the plan preparation and submittal requirements. Applications and checklists are also available online at www.howardcountymd.gov

The SDP application and checklist provide information on the required number of copies of the SDP and other supplemental documents that may be required such as a forest stand delineation and conservation plan, a wetlands analysis, a floodplain study, a noise study, storm drain computations and an adequate public facilities road test.

A Maryland registered engineer or architect must prepare the necessary plans and supplemental documents.

WHAT FEES ARE REQUIRED?

Filing fees for SDP review and approval are based on a Schedule of Fees adopted each year by Resolution of the County Council and are available at the DPZ Public Service Desk. The fee schedule is also available on DPZ's web site at www.howardcountymd.gov

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR A SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

The six basic steps for processing a site development plan are:

Step 1. Pre-submission Community Meeting, if applicable

If the initial plan submittal for a residential development is a site development plan (no subdivision plan involved), the developer is required to hold a meeting with community residents prior to submitting the development plans to the County. This is an opportunity for community residents to learn plans and ask questions and express any concerns regarding the proposed residential development.

Step 2. Submit the SDP to the County

Applications for SDP approval are submitted by appointment at the DPZ Public Service Desk located on the first floor of the George Howard Building.

The accepted plan will be assigned a file number and distributed to members of the Subdivision Review Committee (SRC).

The SRC is composed of the following County and State departments:

- Planning and Zoning
- Public Works
- Health Department
- Recreation and Parks
- Inspections, Licenses and Permits
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Public School System
- State Highway Administration
- Soil Conservation District

Step 3. Review of the SDP

The SRC agencies will review the site development plan to verify compliance with County and State regulations. The Department of Planning and Zoning coordinates the SRC comments and determines if the plan can be approved. The SRC meets within 3 to 4 weeks after the plan application is accepted by the County.

Step 4. Decision on Technical Completeness of Plan

Within 60 days from submission of the plan, the Department of Planning and Zoning provides a written decision to the applicant indicating that the plan is: (1) technically complete, (2) technically complete with modifications, or (3) in need of revised plans. A plan is technically complete if it complies with the requirements of the SRC departments.

If revised plans are necessary in order to approve the plan, the applicant must revise the plans and resubmit them to the Department of Planning and Zoning within 45 days of receiving the written decision or comments.

Step 5. Planning Board Approval, if applicable

For projects in zoning districts that require site development plan approval by the Planning Board, the Department of Planning and Zoning will advise the applicant of the Planning Board meeting date when it notifies the applicant that the plan is technically approvable.

Step 6. Submit the SDP original for signature approval

Within 180 days of receiving notice that the SDP is technically complete, or within 180 days of Planning Board approval, if required, the applicant must:

- Execute developer agreements, if required
- Pay all required fees to the County
- Submit the original SDP mylar plans to the Department of Planning and Zoning for signatures

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SDP RECEIVES SIGNATURE APPROVAL?

Within one year of signature approval of the site development plan original, the applicant must apply to the Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits for building permits to initiate construction on the site. For single-family attached, apartment and nonresidential developments with multiple buildings, within two years of signature approval, the developer must apply for building permits for all construction authorized by the approved site development plan. For single-family detached developments involving multiple lots, the developer must apply for building permits for all construction authorized by the approved site development plan within five years of signature approval.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE . . .

This brochure is meant to provide a basic understanding of the site development plan process in Howard County. It is not intended as a substitute for the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

For more information contact:

The Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning (410) 313-2350, TTY 410-313-2323 or www.howardcountymd.gov or visit Planning & Zoning's Customer Service Center on the first floor of the George Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland, 212043.

Office Hours are: Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Written inquiries may also be sent to our office at the above address.

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